

# The Future of the Fulton Mall

Mayor Ashley Swearengin

# Fulton Corridor Stakeholder Briefing

- Background on the Fulton Corridor Specific Plan
- Overview of the Plan
- Major Findings from Market Analyses
- Alternatives for the Fulton Mall
- Administration's Recommendation

# Background

- Specific plan – Basic revitalization tool
- Provides detail needed to implement development
- Creates reliability and predictability for private investors and the public
- Prioritizes public infrastructure needs
- “Recipe” for revitalization

# Overview of Fulton Corridor Plan

- Vision for 655 acre “Fulton Corridor”
- 7 Distinct Districts
  - Central Business District and Fulton Mall
  - Cultural Arts/Mural District
  - Civic Center
  - South Stadium District
  - Chinatown
  - Armenian Town/Convention Center
  - Divisadero Triangle

Figure 3.2A - Downtown Districts



KEY

- ① Central Business District and Fulton Mall
- ② Cultural Arts District
- ③ Civic Center
- ④ South Stadium District
- ⑤ Chinatown
- ⑥ Armenian Town / Convention Center
- ⑦ Divisadero Triangle
- Specific Plan Boundary

# Overview of Fulton Corridor Plan

- Market Analyses
- Priority Development Projects
- Land Use Designations and Overlays
- Historic Building Analysis
- Infrastructure Assessment and Implementation
- Open Space
- Implementation Section
- Downtown Development Code

# Major Findings – Market Analyses

- Market Demand in Specific Plan Area through 2035
  - Housing units – 4,060 to 6,960 units
  - Housing units (sf) – 4.9 m to 8.4 m
  - Office (gross sf) – 2.5 m to 3.9 m
  - Regional retail and entertainment (sf) – 1.3 m to 1.6 m
- Total Residential and Commercial (sf) – 8.8 m to 13.9 m

# Fulton Mall

- Why focus on the Fulton Mall?
- Historic Buildings
- Density
- Most cost effective, efficient way to reach “critical mass” needed by other districts in Fulton Corridor
- Not a “silver bullet,” but a “domino”



# Fulton Mall-Existing Conditions

- High Vacancy Rate
  - Ground floor vacancy (2011) is **26%**; twice the City's overall retail vacancy rate of 11.2%; nearly triple the national regional center vacancy rate of 9%
- Low Sales
  - Average annual retail sales of \$92/sf; 25% of national average of \$372/sf
- Low Rents
  - \$.50 to \$.60 sf/month – less than half the region's average rates
- Economic performance vs. potential (2008) = 6%

What should we do?

How should we pay for it?

# Fulton Mall Alternatives

- Fulton Corridor Citizen Advisory Committee
- Public meetings – September/October 2010
- 10 alternatives selected for evaluation by Committee
- Committee ranked the alternatives and selected three options

# Option 1



OPTION 1: RECONNECT THE GRID ON TRADITIONAL STREETS

# Option 2



OPTION 2: RECONNECT THE GRID WITH VIGNETTES

# Option 3



OPTION 3: RESTORATION AND COMPLETION

# Summary of Alternatives

- Option #1 – best economic benefits
- Option #3 – best cultural benefits
- Option #2 – balances economic and cultural benefits

# Option 2: Economics & Design



OPTION 2: RECONNECT THE GRID WITH VIGNETTES



# History of U.S. Pedestrian Malls

- 200 malls installed in 1960s and 1970s
- Over 170 have been removed
- About two dozen remain
- Of remaining malls, universities, hospitals, or other large institutional users are on or immediately adjacent to them

# History of U.S. Pedestrian Malls

- 2005 study on 72 of America's pedestrian malls
- 80% had reintroduced some form of traffic on malls; another 10% were under construction to allow traffic
- Of those reopened, 90% reported “significant improvements in occupancy rates, retail sales, property values, and private sector investment in the downtown area”

# Case Studies

- **South Bend, Indiana – Michigan Street** – experienced a 20% increase in retail sales when reopened to traffic
- **Kalamazoo, MI** – first pedestrian mall in U.S. Removed in 1998. 3 projects underway by 2000. By 2011, every storefront occupied.
- **Pittsburgh, PA – East Liberty Mall** – Vacancy rates at 60% with mall. Streets opened in 1986. In 1992, \$80 m invested and 200 new businesses opened.
- **Eugene, OR-City Center Mall**-Vacancy rate went from 25 to 6% in 4 years.
- **Oak Park, IL-Lake Street**-Sales up 15 - 20%, Vacancy rates went from 25 to 5%.

# Case Studies

- **Louisville, KY-4<sup>th</sup> Street**-Vacancy rate decreased from 80 to 50% in first year.
- **Waco, TX-Austin Ave.**-Ground floor vacancy dropped from 80 to 40% after opening.
- **Poughkeepsie, NY**-31% to 10% drop in vacancy
- **Covington, KY- Old Town Plaza**-Retailers immediately reported year-over-year sales gains of 30%.
- **Burlington, Iowa – Jefferson Street** – ground floor vacancies dropped from 80% to 20% in two years

# Then Why are People so Passionate About the Fulton Mall?

- Fresnans donated money for incredible public art
- We were named an All American City
- We were the second Pedestrian Mall in the Country
- Our civic leaders hired two masters, Gruen and Eckbo
- Many Fresno residents have fond memories of the Fulton Mall

# Cost

- Alternatives
  - **Option #1** “Reconnect the Grid with Traditional Streets” - \$12m to \$12.8 m
  - **Option #2** “Reconnect the Grid with “Vignettes” - \$11.4m to \$12.8 m
  - **Option #3** “Restoration and Completion” - \$8 m to \$16 m

# Cost

- General Fund funding unlikely
- Options for funding:
  - Reprioritize other public works projects
  - Work over several budget cycles
  - Grant funding
- Clear picture of funding options by completion of EIR

# Next Steps

- Citizen Advisory Committee/Public Meetings  
(at City Hall in Council Chambers)
  - Tuesday, October 18, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
  - Tuesday, October 25, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
  - Tuesday, November 1, 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
  - Tuesday, November 8, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
- City Manager to initiate EIR
- Council action in late 2012/early 2013